

NEWS ANALYSIS 1-9998
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JANUARY 21, 1976

THE U.N. MIDDLE EAST DEBATE

ANNCR: VOA NEWS ANALYST RONALD J. DUNLAVEY DISCUSSES THE MIDDLE EAST DEBATE IN THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL:

VOICE: THE SECURITY COUNCIL'S DEBATE ON THE MIDDLE EAST TOOK A ONE-DAY BREAK TUESDAY---A BREAK WHICH MIGHT BE CONSIDERED THE MIDWAY POINT IN THE DEBATE. DURING THE FIRST PART, WHICH BEGAN JANUARY TWELFTH, THE TIME WAS DEVOTED TO SPEECHES AND STATEMENTS OF POSITION. THE SECOND PART, BEGINNING WEDNESDAY OF THIS WEEK, APPEARS TO BE BRINGING THE COUNCIL TO THE BUSINESS OF CONSIDERING ACTUAL RESOLUTIONS.

THERE IS CONSIDERABLE SPECULATION ABOUT WHAT KIND OF DRAFT PROPOSAL THE ARAB STATES ARE PREPARING. IT IS SAID TO CALL FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES, RECOGNITION OF THE INALIENABLE NATIONAL RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIANS, AND THE NEED FOR A SYSTEM OF GUARANTEES FOR A FUTURE PEACE AGREEMENT. THE SPONSORS OF THE RESOLUTION ARE ALSO SAID TO WANT ANOTHER SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE ON THE MIDDLE EAST WITHIN A FEW MONTHS.

THE CHANCES OF SUCH A RESOLUTION PASSING ARE GENERALLY REGARDED AS QUESTIONABLE AT BEST. OBSERVERS ARE POINTING TO THE RESTATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN POSITION AS SET FORTH BY AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN JUST BEFORE TUESDAY'S RECESS--EVIDENTLY TO MAKE CLEAR THAT THERE IS NO MISUNDERSTANDING OF THAT POSITION. MR. MOYNIHAN'S STATEMENT WAS NOTABLY LOW-KEYED. "WE HAVE LISTENED TO THE IDEAS PUT FORWARD," HE SAID, "AND WE UNDERSTAND THE SENTIMENTS AND CONCERNs BEHIND MANY OF THEM." HE STRESSED THAT THE UNITED STATES IS SYMPATHETIC TO THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM, INCLUDING THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE. BUT, HE SAID, THE UNITED STATES FEELS THAT CONTINUED

CONTACT AND CONTINUED NEGOTIATION ARE VITAL IF THERE IS TO BE A SETTLEMENT OF THE MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM. AND THE CHANCES FOR CONTINUED CONTACT AND NEGOTIATION WILL BE SERIOUSLY DAMAGED IF THE ACCEPTED FRAMEWORK FOR THEM IS CHANGED WITHOUT THE CONSENT OF ALL THE PARTIES CONCERNED.

THE FRAMEWORK IN QUESTION, OF COURSE, IS SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION NUMBER TWO HUNDRED FORTY-TWO OF NINETEEN SIXTY-SEVEN, SUPPLEMENTED BY NUMBER THREE HUNDRED THIRTY-EIGHT OF NINETEEN SEVENTY-THREE. (OPT). WARNING AGAINST CHANGES IN THESE RESOLUTIONS UNACCEPTABLE TO ANY OF THE PARTIES CONCERNED, MR. MOYNIHAN EMPHASIZED THAT AMERICAN OPPOSITION TO SUCH CHANGES IS BASED PRIMARILY ON THE BELIEF THAT THEY WOULD SET BACK THE CHANCES FOR FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARD A MIDEAST SETTLEMENT. JUST FOR ONE EXAMPLE, THEY WOULD DAMAGE THE PROSPECTS FOR A USEFUL GENEVA MIDEAST CONFERENCE--- THE MOST PROMISING FORUM FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT. (END OPT.)

SO, AS THE SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE ENTERS ITS SECOND PHASE, THE QUESTION IS WHAT KIND OF RESOLUTION WILL BE SUBMITTED, AND WHETHER--IF IT IS A HARD-LINE RESOLUTION---IT WILL BE MODIFIED AS IT COMES UNDER SCRUTINY BY THE ENTIRE COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP. IT IS COMMON KNOWLEDGE THAT AN UNACCEPTABLE RESOLUTION COULD DRAW AN AMERICAN VETO, AND IT IS HARD TO SEE ANY REAL ADVANTAGE IN THIS FOR ANYBODY. MR. MOYNIHAN REMARKED THAT THE DEBATE HAS BEEN A PROFITABLE ONE BY VIRTUE OF THE IDEAS SET FORTH. IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE IF IT WERE TO CONCLUDE ON A NEGATIVE NOTE---AND SUCH A CONCLUSION AS SEEN HERE, NEITHER NECESSARY NOR USEFUL.